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Governing Council of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

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Draft report of the Committee of the Whole

I. Introduction

1. At its 1st plenary meeting, on the afternoon of Friday, 17 April 2015, the Governing Council agreed to establish a committee of the whole to consider agenda items 5, 7 and 8.

2. The Committee of the Whole was chaired by Nii Lantey Vanderpuye (Ghana), one of the three Vice-Presidents of the Governing Council.

II. Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme, including coordination matters (agenda item 5)

3. The Committee took up the item at its 1st meeting, on the afternoon of Friday, 17 April 2015. In organizing its work, it agreed to entrust consideration of the draft resolutions set out in document HSP/GC/25/3/Add.1 to the drafting committee that had been established by the Governing Council.

4. The Committee also agreed to take up the issues arising under agenda item 5 in the following order: work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives during the intersessional period (HSP/GC/25/3 and Add.2); activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) (HSP/GC/25/2); review of the governance structure of UN-Habitat (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.1); seventh session of the World Urban Forum (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.2); United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III) (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.3); joint progress report of the executive directors of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and UN-Habitat (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.4); cooperation with agencies and organizations within the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other Habitat Agenda partners (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.5); and draft international guidelines on urban and territorial planning (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.6).

A. Work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives during the intersessional period

5. The Committee took note of the work of the Committee of Permanent Representatives during the intersessional period, as set out in documents HSP/GC/25/3 and Add.2.

B. Activities of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

6. The Deputy Executive Director of UN-Habitat, Aisa Kirabo Kacyira, summarized the action taken by UN-Habitat to implement the resolutions adopted by the Governing Council at its twenty-fourth session, as set out in the report of the Executive Director (HSP/GC/25/2).

7. The Committee took note of the report.

C. Review of the governance structure of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

8. Introducing the report of the Executive Director on the review of the governance structure of UN-Habitat (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.1), the Deputy Executive Director recalled that no consensus had been reached on governance reform at the twenty-fourth session of the Governing Council. Subsequently, the General Assembly had, through resolution 68/239, encouraged the Committee of Permanent Representatives to reach consensus on how to proceed on the review of the governance structure. Accordingly, in 2014, discussions had been facilitated by the Chair of the Committee and the Permanent Representatives of the United States of America and of Nigeria. The Deputy Executive Director recommended that those representatives consult the Bureau of the Council to agree upon a way forward during the current session.

9. In the ensuing discussion, noting that significant resources had been invested in discussions about the governance review, one representative expressed the hope that renewed efforts would be made and all proposed solutions taken into consideration, given that successful reform could result in UN-Habitat being more effective.

10. The Committee took note of the report.

D. Seventh session of the World Urban Forum

11. Introducing the report of the Executive Director (HSP/GC/24/2/Add.2), the Deputy Executive Director expressed thanks to the Government of Colombia and the city of Medellin for hosting the seventh session of the World Urban Forum. The key outputs of the Forum included the contributions made to the Habitat III preparatory process and the post-2015 development agenda, together with the three main issues identified in the Medellin Collaboration on Urban Resilience: a commitment to equity as a foundation for sustainable urban development, the use of urbanization as an opportunity to advance sustainable development and the need to develop a new urban agenda.

12. In the ensuing discussion, one representative congratulated the Government of Colombia and the city of Medellin and expressed the hope that the outcomes of the Forum would find a place in the work of UN-Habitat and the definition of the new urban agenda.

13. The Committee took note of the report.

E. United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development

14. The Deputy Executive Director outlined progress made in preparing for Habitat III (see HSP/GC/24/2/Add.3), noting that the General Assembly had provided a framework for achieving the objectives of the Conference and that knowledge, policy, engagement and operations road maps had been established at all levels. The Preparatory Committee had met twice, in September 2014 and immediately before the current session.

15. In the ensuing discussion, two representatives said that they had expected that documents, such as the rules of procedure and agenda, would have been near completion by the end of the second session of the Preparatory Committee. They expressed the hope that preparations would accelerate, Conference secretariat positions be filled, the Conference secretariat strengthened, voluntary contributions to the trust fund be increased and developing countries be able to utilize funding from the trust fund to attend the Conference. They recommended that the secretariat should include in its preparatory work a draft resolution submitted by Iraq on regional implementation committees for Habitat III. Several representatives expressed support for strengthening the Conference secretariat and drawing on existing expertise within the organization to improve preparations, given that the firewall was financial, rather than about expertise.

16. The Committee took note of the report.

F. Joint progress report of the executive directors of the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme

17. The Deputy Executive Director drew attention to the joint progress report of the executive directors of UNEP and UN-Habitat (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.4), providing an overview of key activities and progress made over the biennium 2013–2014 in strengthening cooperation between the two programmes.

18. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives commended the secretariat for its strong collaboration with UNEP, with one calling for such collaboration to be strengthened and knowledge and expertise shared widely between countries.

19. One representative said that the co-location of the two programmes was beneficial for the pursuit of synergies and common goals. Noting a convergence of mandates in terms of normative work, he asked whether UN-Habitat had undertaken joint work with UNEP in the field of sustainable building and construction, which was one of the focal areas of the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production patterns. He expressed the hope that the two programmes would actively support the implementation of the 10-year framework, including by promoting sustainable building and enhancing its inclusion in national policies, facilitating the exchange of experiences and best practices, liaising with the International Organization for Standardization on certification, identifying new forms of technology and promoting the exchange of technical expertise, in order to bring about a change of lifestyles at the global level, which was the ultimate goal of chapter 4 of Agenda 21.

20. Another representative observed that the collaboration between UNEP and UN-Habitat was key in avoiding duplication of effort, especially at the country level. She sought clarification regarding the termination at the country level of Habitat Programme Managers, who had played a significant role in coordinating collaborative activities, including with local ministries and other United Nations entities.

21. One representative pointed out that the joint activities of the two programmes, including through the Greener Cities Partnership, promoted resource efficiency and fostered a better understanding of its impact on the sustainability of cities. She urged UN-Habitat to work closely with Governments, including on institutional and land reforms and land banking, embracing partnerships and encouraging high-density and vertical development. UN-Habitat should enhance capacity-building on urban planning to avoid unsustainable transport patterns, working closely with stakeholders in national Governments to develop a long-term framework for urban transport systems, culminating in enhanced urban-rural linkages that harnessed the transformative power of urbanization for sustainable development. She drew attention to the sustainable transport action framework adopted at the first ministerial and expert conference on the Africa Sustainable Transport Forum, calling for its implementation with support from UNEP and UN-Habitat.

22. Another representative asked whether any joint activities dealt with the energy needs for cooking or heating in developing countries and the specific needs of the urban poor.

23. In response to the comments made, the Deputy Executive Director mentioned that the posts of Habitat Programme Managers had been discontinued in some countries owing to a lack of resources in the Foundation General Purpose Fund. She appealed to member States to contribute, or increase their contributions, to the Fund. In recognition of the importance of urbanization, a number of countries were funding their Managers, while other Managers were funded through programmes of work and projects.

24. A representative of the secretariat provided an overview of a programme on promoting energy efficiency in buildings in East Africa, developed in collaboration with UNEP. Its main objective was to mainstream energy efficiency in buildings, review building codes to integrate energy and resource efficiency measures and establish "green mortgages". One of the outcomes of the programme in Kenya had been the introduction of the mandatory use of solar water heating systems in any building that consumed more than 200 litres of hot water per day. Another representative of the secretariat drew attention to a number of joint activities, including on sustainable mobility in rapid transit systems, and a joint programme on climate change adaptation in cities.

25. A representative of the secretariat confirmed that UN-Habitat was working with other United Nations entities in the context of UN-Energy with the aim of promoting universal access to energy for the urban poor, including by advocating forms of low-cost technology such as improved cook stoves. In that regard, more than 180 young people had been trained to build improved stoves and UN-Habitat was planning, in collaboration with the International Labour Organization, to provide seed capital to the young people who had been trained to initiate their green enterprises and to enable them to manufacture improved stoves. Low-cost solar lighting had been installed in some 4,000 households in informal settlements to showcase best practice. He stressed that sustainable building design applied to all households, not only middle-income and higher-income households. UN-Habitat had published a manual on sustainable building design that was useful for all sectors and aimed to work with universities to revise curricula, integrating sustainable housing aspects.

26. Another representative of the secretariat drew attention to a recently launched joint publication, *Green Building Interventions for Social Housing*, which was the main outcome of collaboration with the Division of Technology, Industry and Economics of UNEP, and the imminent launch during the current session of a programme on sustainable buildings and construction under the 10-year framework of programmes in collaboration with UNEP and the Government of Finland.

27. The Committee took note of the report.

G. Cooperation with agencies and organizations within the United Nations system, intergovernmental organizations outside the United Nations system, non-governmental organizations and other partners in the implementation of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme medium-term strategic and institutional plan

28. The Deputy Executive Director drew attention to the report of the Executive Director (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.5), in which progress in UN-Habitat cooperation with other entities from 1 January 2013 to 31 December 2014 was reviewed.

29. In the ensuing discussion, one representative sought further information about the UN-Habitat partnership with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and the potential for a special report on the right to the city to be taken into account in the formulation of the new urban agenda. He emphasized the importance of adopting a rights-based approach to the new urban agenda, building on previous work carried out by UN-Habitat and other entities of the United Nations system.

30. Another representative suggested that UN-Habitat was not sufficiently visible on the ground in countries; cooperation with United Nations entities that were present at the national level could help to remedy that situation. She sought clarification regarding joint activities on water, noting that a water programme undertaken in collaboration with UNEP and the United Nations Children's Fund, among others, had been subsumed into the basic services programme, which had brought about a reduction in funding for water.

31. The Deputy Executive Director drew attention to tools and products created under the Global Land Tool Network that enabled member States to locate and identify land, even in densely and poorly planned slums or in areas of mixed land use. That work had been commended by the High-level Panel of Eminent Persons on the Post-2015 Development Agenda and had been considered in the context of the formulation of the sustainable development goals. UN-Habitat was part of a United Nations team on ensuring the rule of law in fostering sustainable development, specifically with regard to land and property rights. She said that UN-Habitat Country Programme Documents were being strengthened in order to enhance understanding of country needs in the light of a recent evaluation of UN-Habitat by the Office of Internal Oversight Services.

32. A representative of the secretariat said that the draft guidelines on mainstreaming the right to the city and a rights-based approach had been developed for Habitat III and would be submitted to the Preparatory Committee for its consideration at its third session. The draft guidelines had already been circulated within UN-Habitat and were to be transmitted shortly to the Human Rights Council and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

33. A representative of the secretariat said that the Water and Sanitation Trust Fund had been converted into the Urban Basic Services Trust Fund, covering all the expected accomplishments of focus area 4 of the work programme. Financial contributions had been stable and the donor base diversified by including contributions from development banks, including the African Development Bank and the European Investment Bank. He drew attention to new projects on water and sanitation in Malawi and Ghana, funded by the Government of Canada, noting that, the change of nomenclature notwithstanding, water and sanitation remained the main focus of the Trust Fund.

34. The Committee took note of the report.

H. Draft international guidelines on urban and territorial planning

35. The Deputy Executive Director drew attention to the report of the Executive Director on draft international guidelines on urban and territorial planning (HSP/GC/25/2/Add.6), highlighting that the draft guidelines had been developed with the support of a geographically balanced group of experts nominated by national Governments, United Nations entities, local authorities, development partners, associations of planners, and researchers and academic institutions, established with the support of the Governments of France and Japan.

36. In the ensuing discussion, several representatives commended the work of UN-Habitat on the draft guidelines and expressed the hope that they would be adopted by means of a resolution at the current session. Several representatives spoke of the importance of customizing the guidelines to national circumstances. One expressed the hope that the guidelines would be widely used, given that they added significant value to the work of UN-Habitat.

37. One representative asked whether the draft guidelines had been formally circulated to member States and other Governments for their comments and whether a draft resolution on the matter was before the Governing Council. Another said that the draft guidelines should be widely shared with member States so that feedback could be provided on approaches to planning, including those relevant to small island developing States.

38. One representative expressed appreciation for the work of the expert group, recognizing the significant effort involved and the complexity of adapting the guidelines to various situations. He asked developing countries to consider whether their circumstances were adequately catered for in the proposed instruments, noting that instruments anticipating growth were equally important as reactive instruments such as regulations. He said that the role of civil society had not been sufficiently elaborated in the guidelines and that greater emphasis should be placed on the urban-rural relationship in terms of energy, water and food security. He also suggested that metropolitan regions and new spatial forms merited greater attention.

39. A representative of the secretariat said that the draft guidelines had been considered by the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UN-Habitat in a subcommittee meeting at the end of January 2015 and members' comments had been included in the final draft, which had been shared with member States and made available on the Governing Council website. Text referring to the guidelines had been included in a draft omnibus decision before the Council, but a specific draft resolution had yet to be circulated. He acknowledged the difficulty of capturing multiple contexts in the guidelines and the delicate task involved in balancing the interests represented.

40. He drew attention to a compendium of more than 40 case studies elaborated by the experts (see HSP/GC/25/INF/7), which illustrated the diversity of national circumstances and included examples of civil society participation and metropolitan regions. In terms of customization, the guidelines had been developed for further adaptation.

41. The Committee took note of the report.

III. Work programme of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme and budget of the United Nations Habitat and Human Settlements Foundation for the biennium 2016–2017 (agenda item 7)

42. The Committee took up the item at its 3rd meeting, on the morning of Monday, 20 April 2015.

A. Proposed work programme and budget for the biennium 2016–2017

43. The Deputy Executive Director introduced the proposed work programme and budget for the biennium 2016–2017 (HSP/GC/25/5), which, she said, took into account the mandates given to the secretariat by the General Assembly and the Council. The work programme and budget had been reviewed and endorsed by the Committee of Permanent Representatives.

44. She said that the work programme was based on the approved strategic plan 2014–2019 and the strategic framework 2016–2017. It had been prepared in a participatory manner with a view to improving efficiency, coordination, transparency, coherence and accountability. Comprising seven subprogrammes, it was similar to that for the biennium 2014–2015 and set out the key challenges facing human settlements and the main strategies for tackling them. In selecting the outputs, efforts had

been made to ensure that they were transformational, relevant and of high value. In the upcoming biennium, UN-Habitat would strengthen the implementation of results-based management and evaluation to assess the impact of its activities and continue to mainstream cross-cutting issues such as climate change, human rights, gender and youth into its work.

45. With regard to the budget, she said that a realistic proposal had been developed that would enable UN-Habitat to deliver its proposed work programme while enhancing efficiency and productivity and achieving maximum value. The overall budget for the biennium 2016–2017 was $482 million, an increase of 22.2 per cent compared with 2014–2015. Of that amount, $45.6 million would be funded from the Foundation general purpose fund, the same level as in 2014–2015. The increase was due to significant growth in the technical cooperation budget, reflecting greater demand for the advisory services of UN-Habitat and the successful expansion of its normative and operational activities, which had been critical in compensating for the shortfall in voluntary earmarked contributions. Although the UN-Habitat resource mobilization strategy had succeeded in widening the donor base, the positive gains in the core budget had been outweighed by lower contributions from traditional donors and unfavourable exchange rate fluctuations. UN-Habitat was dealing with the issue of declining voluntary non-earmarked contributions – a problem faced by the United Nations system as a whole that was being debated by an inter-agency risk treatment working group. Focus was also being placed on providing greater evidence of results and improving value for money, including through the enhancement of business processes, risk management and stronger strategic partnerships. She welcomed the increased funding pledged by the Government of Kenya at the opening meeting of the current session and urged other countries to follow suit.

46. In the ensuing discussion, a number of representatives welcomed the work programme and budget, which they said was realistic and achievable. Noting with concern the lack of resources, the decline in non-earmarked income and the unpredictability of funding, several representatives called upon all member States to increase their contributions, in particular non-earmarked funding. One representative questioned the disproportionate allocation of funds across some subprogrammes and suggested that it should be reviewed. Another said that UN-Habitat should review and re-evaluate its resource mobilization strategy to make it more effective in tackling the existing challenges. She also suggested that provision should be made for the potential reshaping of UN-Habitat as an outcome of Habitat III. Several representatives recognized that the organization required increased funds that would strengthen its mandate and make it fit for purpose.

47. One representative suggested that there was a need to broaden the donor base of the organization so that the work programme and budget were not simply a wish list. She also stressed that results-based management was important and that a strategy for its implementation should be put in place. She said that sufficient resources should be allocated to the mainstreaming of cross-cutting issues and that that should be spelled out in the work programme and budget.

48. In response to the comments made, a representative of the secretariat explained the rationale for the allocation of funding to the subprogrammes and said that it could be reviewed. In addition, she said that UN-Habitat was working on strengthening its resource mobilization strategy and welcomed input from member States.

49. The Committee took note of the report.

B. Report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions

50. The Deputy Executive Director introduced the note by the secretariat on the report of the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (HSP/GC/25/Add.1). She said that the Advisory Committee had recommended the approval of the proposed work programme and budget for the biennium 2016–2017, taking into account the comments of the Committee of Permanent Representatives on strengthening evaluation, aligning future budget proposals more closely with income projections and expenditure patterns and reviewing long-vacant positions, while taking into account the potential implications of Habitat III and the post-2015 development agenda, among other things.

51. In the ensuing discussion, one representative, highlighting the importance of the budget as a tool for financial planning and control, sought clarification on plans to implement the recommendations of the Advisory Committee, in particular with regard to the recommendation on the alignment of future budget proposals.

52. The representative of the secretariat emphasized that UN-Habitat was committed to implementing the recommendations and was better equipped to do so in the light of the introduction of new tools such as the International Public Sector Accounting Standards and the enterprise resource planning project, Umoja, both of which would enable more accurate monitoring of expenditure and income. In accordance with General Assembly resolution 67/226, UN-Habitat managed its available and projected core and non-core resources within an integrated budgetary framework, ensuring that all core and earmarked activities were aligned with its strategic plan. Its resource mobilization strategy was closely aligned with budget proposals such that requests to donors for non-earmarked resources were targeted to gaps in funding, in accordance with the recommendation of the inter-agency risk treatment working group that was considering the decline of non-earmarked contributions throughout the United Nations system. To achieve the prioritized activities of the work programme, consideration was also being given to the potential for "soft earmarking" by donors to large programmes, either thematically or regionally.

53. The Committee took note of the report.

C. Annual progress report for 2014 on the implementation of the strategic plan for the period 2014–2019

54. The Deputy Executive Director introduced the annual progress report for 2014 on the implementation of the strategic plan for the period 2014–2019 (HSP/GC/25/5/Add.2), which provided a detailed analysis of the progress achieved at the global, regional and country levels by UN-Habitat and its partners. It highlighted programmes that were excelling and those that needed strengthening, providing an overview of the status of financial resources and their use in 2014.

55. The Committee took note of the report.

IV. Provisional agenda and other arrangements for the twenty-sixth session of the Governing Council (agenda item 8)

56. [*To be completed*]

V. Endorsement of draft resolutions and closing statements

57. [*To be completed*]